

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 INR-07 L-02 ACDA-05

NSAE-00 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 SS-15 NSC-05 OMB-01 DODE-00 ARA-06 EB-07 /076 W

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R 201921Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6016

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 01641

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR FR US

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR MEETS WITH SOCIALIST PARTY HEAD

FRANCOIS MITTERRAND

SUMMARY: AS PART OF MY SERIES OF GET-ACQUAINTED MEET-INGS WITH FRENCH POLITICAL LEADERS BOTH IN AND OUT OF POWER, I INVITED SOCIALIST PARTY FIRST SECRETARY FRANCOIS MITTERRAND TO LUNCH JANUARY 20. I FOUND HIM FRIENDLY, ARTICULATE, FRANK AND INTERESTING. AS ARE MOST FRENCHMEN TODAY, MITTERRAND WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE ECONOMIC CRISIS, EXPRESSING A FAIRLY PRAGMATIC, AS OPPOSED TO A REVOLUTIONARY, ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM. IN A TOUR D'HORIZON OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS, MITTERRAND SAID THAT THE SOVIET UNION WILL NOT GIVE UP ON DETENTE DESPITE A TEMPORARY INTERNAL HARDENING; THAT THE UNITED STATES SEEMS TO HAVE WITHDRAWN FROM EUROPE IDEOLOGICALLY; AND THAT THE U.S. CONTINUES TO HAVE AN INTERVENTIONIST IMAGE PROBLEM BECAUSE OF ALLEGATIONS ABOUT OUR ROLE IN THE COUP THAT OVERTHREW ALLENDE. MITTERRAND DISPLAYED THE CONFIDENCE OF A POLITICIAN WHO IS SURE THAT THE LEFT WILL GOVERN FRANCE IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. WHETHER OR NOT MITTERRAND HIMSELF EVER BECOMES PRESIDENT OF FRANCE, I BELIEVE IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO MAINTAIN A CONSTRUCTIVE HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE WITH HIM, NOT ONLY IN PARIS BUT

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WHENEVER HE TRAVELS TO THE UNITED STATES. END SUMMARY.

1. MITTERRAND WAS ACCOMPANIED BY GERARD JAQUET, NATIONAL SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN RELATIONS; ROBERT PONTILON, SOCIALIST PARTY SECRETARY FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS; AND CHARLES HERNU, THE PARTY'S EXPERT AND SPOKESMAN ON DEFENSE ISSUES. HIS MAIN CONCERN WAS THE ECONOMIC CRISIS, AND HIS WORRY ABOUT THE ADVERSE IMPACT ON EUROPE OF A DEEPENING RECESSION IN THE UNITED STATES. UNLIKE SOME OF THE ECONOMISTS IN HIS OWN PARTY, MITTERRAND EXPRESSED AGREEMENT THAT THE MAJOR CAUSE OF RUNAWAY INFLATION WAS THE UNBALANCED MONETARY AND FISCAL POLICIES OF THE LATE 1960'S. HE ALSO ARGUED THAT THE LACK OF PLANNING FOR SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL INNOVATION CAUSES THE TYPE OF PREMATURE EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT WHICH AGGRAVATES BASIC INFLATIONARY TENDENCIES. HE FEELS THAT THE NEED FOR PLANNING IS WHERE THE SOCIALISTS ADD THEIR TOUCH TO TRADITIONAL MONETARY AND FISCAL POLICY.

2. I ASKED MITTERRAND HIS VIEW OF RECENT EAST-WEST DEVELOPMENTS. MITTERRAND SAID THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS TOO MUCH AT STAKE IN THE CREDITS AND TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY AVAILABLE THROUGH DETENTE TO CHANGE ITS POLICY DRASTICALLY. ANY HARDENING CURRENTLY VISIBLE IN SOVIET POLICY CAN ONLY BE TEMPORARY REGARDLESS OF WHO FOLLOWS BREZHNEV.

3. WITH RESPECT TO U.S.-FRENCH BILATERAL RELATIONS, MITTERRAND SAID THAT THE BASIC AFFECTION FOR THE UNITED STATES AMONG THE FRENCH PEOPLE REMAINS VERY STRONG, EVEN AMONG THOSE ELEMENTS WHICH ARE CRITICAL OF THE U.S. AT ANY GIVEN TIME. MITTERRAND SAID THAT ON A PHILOSOPHICAL LEVEL, WHAT BOTHERS HIM IS THE FEELING THAT THE UNITED STATES IS ENGAGED IN AN IDEOLOGICAL WITHDRAWAL FROM EUROPE. THE SECURITY AND ECONOMIC INVOLVEMENTS ARE STILL THERE, BUT THE INTENSIVE IDEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE THAT EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES USED TO HAVE IS ABSENT. I USED MITTERRAND'S OWN ANALYSIS TO POINT OUT THAT FRANCE'S CONCERN ABOUT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD NOT FOCUS ON THE FALSE ISSUE OF DOMINATION, BUT ON THE DANGER THAT THE UNITED STATES MIGHT FOLLOW ITS

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HISTORICAL PATTERN OF WITHDRAWAL INTO ITSELF.

4. MITTERRAND SAID THAT THE U.S. STILL SUFFERS FROM AN INTERVENTIONIST IMAGE THAT CAME TO ITS HEIGHT IN VIETNAM BUT IS UNFORTUNATELY PERPETUATED BY ALLEGATIONS OF OUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE OVERTHROW OF ALLENDE IN CHILE. I ASSURED MITTERRAND THAT FROM MY FORMER ASSIGNMENTS IN WASHINGTON I WAS IN A POSITION TO KNOW THAT THE U.S. HAD

NO ROLE IN ALLENDE'S OVERTHROW. MITTERRAND MADE POLITE
NOISES IN RESPONSE, BUT DID NOT SEEM CONVINCED. I FEAR
HE SUFFERS FROM THAT TYPICALLY FRENCH CONTRADICTION OF

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R 201921Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6017

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 01641

REPROACHING THE U.S. SIMULTANEOUSLY FOR WITHDRAWING FROM
ITS ASSIGNED INTERNATIONAL ROLE AND FOR INTERVENING
THROUGH THE SHEER PHYSICAL MOMENTUM OF ITS GREAT POWER
WHENEVER AMERICAN INTERESTS ARE THREATENED.

5. FINALLY, I FOUND MITTERRAND SPEAKING WITH THE CONFI-
DENCE OF A SEASONED POLITICIAN WHO CAME WITHIN ONE PER-
CENT OF BEING PRESIDENT, AND WHO IS PERSONALLY SURE THAT
THE LEFT WILL GOVERN FRANCE IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.
I WAS ALSO IMPRESSED BY HIS DEEP DISTRUST OF THE SOVIET
UNION. AS HE PUT IT, THE SOVIETS SEE MARXISM AS A
RELIGION, AND WOULD THEREFORE PREFER TO DEAL WITH OPPOS-
ING RELIGIONS THAN WITH HERETICS IN THEIR OWN CHURCH.

6. COMMENT: WHETHER OR NOT MITTERRAND EVER BECOMES
PRESIDENT OF FRANCE IS A MATTER OF CONJECTURE. HE HIM-
SELF SEEMS RESIGNED TO THE PROBABILITY THAT THE FIRST
LEFT PRESIDENT OF FRANCE UNDER THE FIFTH REPUBLIC WILL BE
SOMEONE YOUNGER, GIVEN THE FACT THAT GISCARD'S TERM DOES

NOT END UNTIL 1981. NEVERTHELESS, MITTERRAND WILL
CLEARLY HAVE A MAJOR IMPACT ON LEFT AND NATIONAL POLITICS
FOR SEVERAL YEARS TO COME. IT IS IMPORTANT, THEREFORE,
THAT WE MAINTAIN A HIGH-LEVEL AND CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE
WITH HIM, NOT ONLY HERE IN PARIS, BUT WHENEVER HIS
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FREQUENT TRAVELS TAKE HIM TO THE UNITED STATES.
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